

Arbovale West Va/
June 25th 1941.

RWB

Mr. Paul H. Becker.
Charleston West Va.

Dear Sir:

I have at hand your letter of June 23rd in regard to Little Levels and Yew Mountain. The writer assigned to the Pocahontas County History, is asking for additional personal information about these places :-
What has made them important; the people who have lived there; how they have been used; a description of the places.

Why were these places picked for the Worlds fair, besides their picturesqueness? (pictures representing representing the County) Make the remarks personal and Informal.

PHB

THE YEW MOUNTAINS OF POCAHONTAS COUNTY. The Yew range of mountains in Pocahontas is composed of many different mountains and ridges and is the result of a greatly dissected high plateau, made up of many small ranges, as Spruce Mountain, Kennison Mountain, Cranberry Mountain, Black Mountain, Turkey Mountain, Gauley Mountain Tea Creek Mountain, Red Lick Mountain, and many other ridges of minor importance

This range of mountains is situated in the the Little Levels District, and north-western part of the Edray District.

This range of mountains forms the water shed between the Greenbrier River and the waters of the Cherry River, Williams River, Gauley River, and Elk River which all have their source in the western part of Pocahontas County

The Yew Mountains extend from Greenbrier County line to the Thorny Flat or the waters of the Shavers Fork of Cheat river. but are not

situated on the Greenbrier River drainage side.

The Yew range of mountains have been heavily timbered, mostly with Spruce. The old Pioneers of Pocahontas called the Spruce Pine, "Yew Pine," they also called the Hemlock Tree Spruce Pine; they had the pines criss-crossed; in their proper names; Many of the old land Grant calls, give the corners as a Yew Pine but when found, now is a Spruce. When they call for a Spruce pine a Hemlock is found.

The Name of "Yew" has been given these ranges on account of their evergreen appearance. The Black Mountain was named "Black" because of its dark Black Green color. Kennison Mountain was so named from the old Pioneer Kennison that settled in the Little Levels, and not many miles away. Cranberry Mountain was so named from the famous Cranberry Galdes situate on the head of the Cranberry River,

Turkey Mountain, because of so many wild Turkeys were found there. Gauley mountain was named from the Gauley River. Tea Creek Mountain was named from Tea Creek.

Red Lick Mountain received its name from the fact that the soil is of a redish color; And one of the old hunters of that section had a deer lick on this mountain and in order to designate it from other Deer licks called it the Red lick, and thereafter it was called Red Lick Mountain.

The timber operations of the Yew Mountains were sponsored ^{and} by ~~the~~ carried on by the Cherry River Boom and Lumber Company. With their Mills at Richwood.

The settlement in the ~~the~~ Yew Mountains is sparse; this entire section is now mostly owned by the U.S. Monongahela National Forest. The up lands is used for grazing.

LITTLE LEVELS:- The Phrase "Little Levels" and the LITTLE LEVELS DISTRICT is entirely different, and doesn't mean the same thing. It must be here understood that the phrase "Little Levels" refers to a particular neighborhood in the heart of the Little Levels Magisterial District, which was formed shortly after the formation of Pocahontas County,

The Little Levels District as near as can be determined has an area of 192.68 square miles and is situated in the southwestern part of Pocahontas County, and takes the entire remainder of the County southwest of Edray District, and the Huntersville District. It extends southward from the divide between the waters of the Williams River and Middle Fork, including the water shed of the latter stream, Cranberry River, Cherry River, and Hills Creek, and crosses east of the Greenbrier River to include the area south of Beaver Creek, and west of North Fork of Anthony Creek.

This section or neighborhood called "Little Levels" is first found in the Greenbrier County Records; this section of Pocahontas County was first in the bounds Greenbrier County, which was formed from Botetourte, and Montgomery Counties in the year of 1777; and the early pioneers when they crossed the Allegheny mountains, searching for localities that were favorable for homes they came upon the section of what is termed the Little Levels, and farther down in Greenbrier they found a much larger and similar section, and they began to erect and establish homes at both places which was then in Greenbrier County. In order to designate the two, from each place, one was called the Little Levels, and the other the "Big Levels," which is some times referred to in the land records, as the "Great Levels."

The Big Levels is situated in Greenbrier County, The Little Levels is in Pocahontas County. When Bath County was formed it included the Little Levels in its bounds, then when Pocahontas was formed from Bath, Pendleton, and Randolph counties it included this fine farming section of the Little Levels and the name still clings to the neighborhood.

The largest comparatively flat area in Pocahontas County, and of a rolling nature is found in the Little Levels around and about the town of Hillsboro. This is a Lime Stone section and the most productive part of Pocahontas County especially for wheat and Corn; In the northern part of the County Limestone crops out in a narrow strip along the western side of the Greenbrier Valley, and south west of Marlinton it widens out which forms the Little Levels. This is a Lime Stone farming section, many sink holes are in this section, and many of the small streams disappear from view, to emerge nearer Greenbrier River.

The average elevation of the Little Levels is about 2400 feet, which is not too high for the maturing of most agricultural crops grown in West Virginia. Wheat growing is the staple crop in the Little Levels, along with Corn, and all kinds of hay, and vegetables. This farming section is hemmed in by the Droop Mountain on the West, and on the North by Caesar Mountain, and Cranberry Mountain. and is situated about two miles on the northwest side of the Greenbrier River

Hillsboro is situated in the heart of the Little Levels and is the oldest town in Pocahontas County from the standpoint of incorporation, having been chartered in 1886. (The town of Huntersville in the Huntersville District was incorporated December 18th 1822 by the Virginia General Assembly Acts of 1822-23 but charter was surrendered at a date unknown) Hillsboro is located upon a broad level rolling like plain in the Little Levels, and being situated in the finest limestone farming area in the County and being largely supported by the products from the farms.

For many years Hillsboro was the educational center of that region and supported the Hillsboro Academy, which was patronized by the County.

The old Brick Academy was first erected in the year of the 1840's. The name of the town was changed from Hillsboro to "Academy" but finally, went back to its former name Hillsboro.

the first Settler in the Little Levels was John Mc Neil who first appeared there in the year of 1765 . he was a native of Fredrick County Virginia , but passed much of his early life in or near Cumberland, Maryland. There is a tradition that he was a good boxer and in a pugilistic contest, his antagonist was so badly knocked out, that he was thought to be fatally injured. And to avoid arrest and trial for murder he at once refuged . He followed the trend of the Alleghanies . A long time was spent in their gloomy solitudes. Finly going deeper and deeper in into the wilderness he came at last in view of the Little Levels, about 1765, He saw an extensive , woodded plain, bordered m ountain ranges of unsurpassed beauty, and very fertile.

He decided to settle here; and chose a site for his cabin near the present home of the late Hon, M. J. McNeel , traces of his cabin have been seen by many persons yet living between the gate on the Public Road and his residence.

Here the solitary man brooded over his supposed guilt, prayed with his broken heart, for pardon, and hunted for his food, living almost entirely upon Fish and Venison; One day while Hunting to his surprise he met Charles and Edward Kinnison from his old home , who had come to thèè region prospecting for a favorable situation for a home. He at once learned from them that the person he had boxed with was not dead or even seriously hurt. This was indeed good news for him and then and there he felt free from all blood stains. John Mc Neel insisted upon his friends the two Kinnisons to take out a Tommahawk right adjoining his tract. tThen the three set out on their return to the Valley of Virginia. While on his visit John McNeel married Mary Davis , who was born in Wales in 1740 and soon after their marriage they came back to the Little Levels . A few acres was soon cleared off , and plenty to subsist upon was raised ; A few other folks began to move to the area and and john Mc Neel built a house for worship which was known as the "White Pole Church". In a few years the Dunmore War opened up , and the three friends Mc Neel nad two Kinnisons went to Lewisburg and joined the expedition to Point Pleasant Oct 10th 1774. They survived that eventful contest , came back but not to remain very long. They wnet back and enlisted in a Company that went from Fredrick County , served during the Revolutionary War then came back to the Little Levels.

Some of the first land grants that were issued by the Commonwealth of Virginia while under the regime of Greenbrier County and are situated in the Little Levels as follows. John Mc Neil 322 Acres in the year of 1783 . N.Kinnison 235 Acres 1789. George Messingbird 413 Acres 1790 situated on the mountain. Samuel Gilleland 248 Acres 1785 John Ewing, 250 Acres 1783. John Ellis, 389 Acres 1789. George and William Clendennin, 52 Acres 1782. James Laird, 300 Acres 1791. John Poage 400 Acres 1783. Jack Treason, 47 Acres, 1783. Elaxander Waddell 300 Acres 1791. Mary Watkins 400 Acres 1792. The above land grants are all found recorded in the Greenbrier Land Grant Books which embrace about 4000 Acres of the Little Levels area.

The following list is found recorded in the Bath County Grant Books and are situated in the Little Levels These grants were issued by the Commonwealth of Virginia while the Little Levels was in Bath County .

Joshua Ewing, 150 Acres 1797. John Erwin, 200 Acres 1811. John Grimes 21 Acres 1823 John Jordan 36 Acres 1801. James Lewis, Jr, 4 Acres 1822. William Wooddell 430 Acres 1799

The foregoing is only a part of the list of of the early settlers of the Little Levels Some of the relatives of the original land owners still have possession of the lands such as the Moors , Mc Neils and Kinnissans and Beards.

Just to the west of Hillsboro is the Droop Mountain Battle ^{field} ~~field~~ which is now a park . To the south of the Greenbrier is the Watoga State Park. To the North East is the famous Cranberry Glades, To the East near Mill point is the site of the Old Indian Fort known as Days Fort, and a little farther east is The the Steven Sewell Cave of Indian Days. In the Town of Hillsboro is the Birth Place and first home ^{of} Pearl Buck, the famous writer and and missionary to China , she was the daughter of ~~of~~ Absolam Sydenstricker , who was a Missionary in China.

Hillsboro was the home of the late Dr Davy Sydenstricker D D. and many other men of highly education. The Town of Hillsboro which is in the heart of the Little Levels, has a large first class High School , a large Graded School two Churches , a Presbyterian , and a Methodist , and has a population as shown in 1940 224. The very highest degree of citizenship is found among the farming class of people in the Little Levels . which was so called because of the acreage of level land

West Virginia Writers' Project

RESEARCH IDENTIFICATION REPORT

-3-

Subject NATURAL SETTING Pocahontas County,
Part 1 Sec D.

Date July 12th 1941

Research Worker Roscoe W. Brown.

Date Research Taken Between
July 2nd & July 12

Typist Roscoe W. Brown.

Date Typed July 8- 9 - th

Source Boyd Stevenson, Attorney, at Monterey Va;
in regard to the Negro Knob.

Date Filed _____

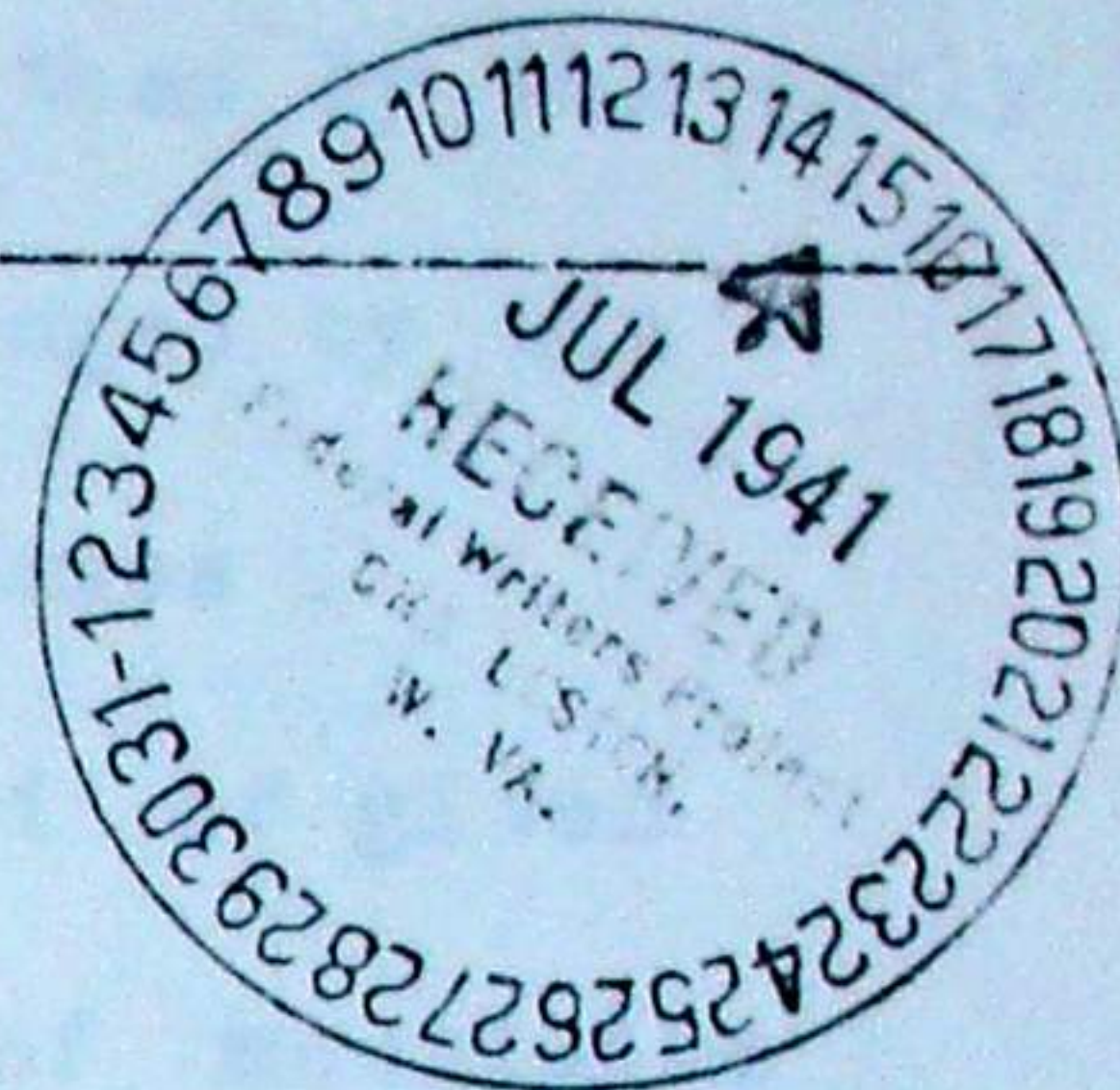
Rev, C.C. Arbogast , told about the Indian on
Frank Mountain,

Historical Sketches of Pocahontas County

made a trip to Frank Mountain , and the

TOP Allegheny Mountain. Public Records at the Clerks Office at Marlinton

- Pocahontas County , WV.



Roscoe W. Brown
Roscoe W. Brown.

July-12-1941.

Many of the mountains and ridges of Pocahontas County, have received their names from the rivers or creeks that flow near by. In some cases the mountains receive their name from an adjoining stream, or branch,; and the stream or branch may receive its name from the mountains that was so named by the early settlers.

The names of the Mountains, Knobs, and Ridges, have been given them by the early pioneers of the County. Some of the original names have been changed by the U-S, F-S, and the Geological survey have changed some of the names.

The "ALLEGHENY" Mountains is the name that has been applied of given to the principal trunk^{line} of the Appalachian system of ranges of Mountains in the Eastern United States, The word "Appalachian" was first used by the Spaniards under Desota, in naming the ranges of Mountains, in honor of the Appalachee Indians. Then later was incorrectly called Allegheny.

The word Allegheny derived from the Indian Language, with no certain meaning, : Some people claim that it means in the Indian language, the " Endless Mountains " " Big Mountains " " Big Track " but however it was so named from the Algonquin Indians who were the most prominent of the of the Eastern Indians Their language was the most musical of all Indian languages, avoiding the harsh consonants common in other Indian Language, A large proportion of our Indian Geographical names are Algonquin in origin.

As we follow the main Allegheny Mountains all along the top, on the West Virginia and Virginia line, there are many places that have particular names that is worth keeping in the minds of people.

The Ridge that divides the waters of the Tackets Fork, and the Sutton Run, branches of The North Fork Creek which is the East branch of Deer Creek, is called Little Ridge,; On the western part of this Little Ridge, is a high Knob about 3000 feet in elevation which is called " NEGRO KNOB " and has been so called for about 100 years, the reason for the name is the fact that a Negro Girl is buried on the Knob.

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She was a Slave Girl who belonged to William Dinwiddie, whose home was near what is now Meadow Dale, in Highland County Virginia; This Slave girls duty or assignmant of work, was to bring in the Cows, from the pasture lands and help about the milking; She was instructed by her Master, when the Cows went far off in the Woodland, to be sure to follow the Cows back as they would always come back to their Calves. But it appears that some of the Cows got mixed with some cattle that had been ~~that had been~~ ranged in the Allegheny Mountains, and the girl followed the Cattle thinking she was on her way back home, she finely got bewildered and lost, and wandered in the vast solitude of the Allegheny Mountain till she perished by exposure, and starvation.

Vain search was made all over the neighborhood, and no trace of her ^{could} be found. Finely her decomposed body was found, a few weeks later, by some parties from the Greenbank Neighborhood; Her body was buried at the spot where it was found, her grave is situated on the West side of the main high tpp. The parties that burried her said she had taken her dress off and ^{was} lying upon it; and there was no sign that she was killed by wild animals.

This Negro Knob is a high point that affords a beautiful point to view the surrounding country from, and no doubt that the Slave Girl had climbed to this high point to look for some settlement, which could not be seen at that time. As long as the name clings to this beautiful Knob it will perpetuate the memory of William Dinwiddies Slave Girl, who lost her life on the Knob when she was only 18 years old, which event happened near as can now be ascertained about the year of 1840.

This was the nearest route to the Staunton And Parkersburg Pike for the Greenbank Settlement, and was constructed before the Civil War.

The other road leaves the Pike at the same point and follows the main top of the Buffalo Ridge to the Phillips Farm then follows the contour of the Buffalo Ridge on the north West Side, to unite with the Pinee Grove Road. This Road is known as the "Buffalo Road". Many Springs are found along the top of the Frank Mountain and not far distant from the Old Pike; The "Kelly Spring" is the head of Brush Run.; The Spring at the "Lunceford Place" is the head of Deer Creek; there is a beautiful spring at the "May Place" on the Eastside of the pike and flows into Little River; Spring at the Wilmuth Place; Spring at Yeager place head of the Block Run. large Spring at the old Jacob Yeager home place, which is the head of Little River. These Springs are all Ice Cold and are found near the tops of the Mountain. These springs was an incentive for the pioneer settlement that was made on the Frank Mountain and Top Allegheny Mountain, which was first made by Jacob Yeager who purchased land from the Hulls in the Year of 1823,

The first pioneer settlers who developed homes on the Frank Mountain and the Top Allegheny Mountain ^{Here} Jacob, Yeager; John Yeager. Daniel Wilfong; Phillip Varner ^{Soloman Varner}, James Spencer; Jack Spencer; Wm Wilmoth; Charles Phillips; William Simmons; George Puffenbarger; George Beverage.; Benj Ervin.; Chas Collins; And many other different families of the ^{some} ~~names~~ ^a ~~names~~ above mentioned.

The first surveys in the region of the Top Allegheny was made by Peter Hull, 1795, and the land Grant issued to James Patten for 37 000 Acres and the Jacob Kuhn survey of 30 000 Acres, covered this entire section. On August 4th 1823, Henry Hull, Peter Hull, Thomas Kincaide, John Sittlington, and William Hull. The heirs of Peter Hull descent all of the County of Pendleton of the State of Virginia Sold 585 Acres of land to Jacob Yeager. (See Deed Book No 1 at page 365) which was the land Patented to Peter Hull, and was the ^{land} listed as being in Pendleton County. Jacob Yeager began immediately to establish a home on the Top Allegheny, and in his time he ranked among the most extensive land owners in that whole region which embraced the entire "Dutch Settlement" He erected his home shortly after 1823. He selected a site for his future home at

the large Spring which is the head water of the Little River of the East Prong of the Greenbrier River his house was situated on the west side of the road in a cove that sheltered the home from the severe wind that was common on the Top of the Allegheny Mountain; He was interested in having the mountain settled up, and many families of the Dutch decent made their homes on the mountain and it was thereby called the "Dutch Settlement", the entire neighborhood talked the Dutch language,

Jacob Yeager married Sarah Hidy of Crabbottom; they were the parents of a large family of children, his sons were John, Joel, Jacob, Jr and the daughters were Jane, Elizabeth, Anna, Caroline, Margaret, Catherine, Christine, and Serena.

His Son John Yeager settled on the home place, and reared a large family; his home was the site of the Top Allegheny ^Battle Field which was fought on Dec-13th 1861; The old Breast Works, are yet visible they seam the hills, the old Batteries are still prominent, looking over the Battle field Rifle Pits; and many Vedette lines and scores of Stone Chimneys that have fallen down, at the soldiers cabins, all are plain to be seen, which was the work of the "Boys that wore the Grey" (A complete description of this Battle will have its niche in the Pocahontas History at another Chapter)

Some time long before the Civil war, Jacob Yeager and his son John Yeager with the help of the Community erected a Church, which was used for a commissary by the Southern Soldiers in the war while they were encamped on the Allegheny, this old Log Church stood till about 1905 when it was supplanted by a fine large Church which was a union Church sponsored by the Methodist and the Brethren. It stood for more than thirty years, till in 1941 it was torn down by the two said denominations to make two Churches at other places, there being no congregation in the old Dutch-Settlement of old. The John Yeager homestead is now owned by a John Johnson, which is the only home place occupied of the old Settlement, (It embraces the Battle field)

The old Jacob Yeager home stead, with its many thousand Acres of land is now owned by the Monongahela National Forest; The U-S F-S, is replanting the old fields with the Spruce pine trees, in a few years the entire area of several hundred Acres of Grass land, that was cleared by Jacob Yeager from the virgin forest, will again be covered by a stand of young timber under the protection of the US - F - S. The trees are planted in rows six feet apart.

There is a long leading ridge from the "Top Allegheny" running to the east of the Block Run, which has been locally known as the OLD FIELD RIDGE, and was so named by the early settlers, by the fact that there was a field cleared there at an early date, unknown by any person as to who had cleared it, it was supposed to have been cleared by the Indians.

There is another short Ridge leading from the "Top Allegheny" to the Block Run and has been locally known as the "Harper Mountain" and was so named from the fact, that a man by the name of Harper was hunting on the ridge, got lost, in the night he froze to death. The exact date is now not known, but was about the time of the first settlement that was made on the Top of Allegheny mountain which was about the year of 1823. hence the name Harper Mountain.

The name of "FRANK Mountain" was so named by the first settlers of the Travelers Repose neighborhood, which was due to the fact a man by the name of "FRANK" killed an Indian some where on the mountain, the exact place that it happened is now not known; The tradition handed down by the early settlers of the Travelers Repose is that a Desperate band of the Shawneys, while on a tour of destruction passed through this region, was discovered and a runner was sent to all the settlement on the upper Greenbrier, which was then only two or families, it appears by the tradition handed down, that the trail of the Indians was found on Franks Mountain, and a Company under the leadership of Adam Arbogast, who had been a Spy in the Virginia Militia, followed followed the trail somewhere on the Franks Mountain; (It is more reasonable that Adam Arbogast and the Company followed the Indians from Crabbottom which is so stated in the Affidavit of Adam Arbogast that he had followed the Indians across the head waters of the Greenbrier) And there in the Company a young man by the name of "Frank" who had a new rifle that had not been tried out at long range; he informed his companions that he saw an Indians head above the weeds, they told him they could not see it, they told him to try his new rifle on the Indian if he saw one, he fired on the object, and sure enough hit the Indian plumpster between the eyes. And after this instance the Mountain was called "Franks Mountain" and the first mention of it in the land records